



BUILDING-STRUCTURE INVENTORY FORM

NYS OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION
& HISTORIC PRESERVATION
DIVISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION
(518) 474-0479

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

UNIQUE SITE NO. _____
QUAD _____
SERIES _____
NEG. NO. _____

YOUR NAME: Cynthia Howk DATE: Dec., 1994

133 S. Fitzhugh St.

YOUR ADDRESS: Rochester, NY 14608 TELEPHONE: 546-7029

ORGANIZATION (if any): The Landmark Society of Western New York, Inc.

IDENTIFICATION

1. BUILDING NAME(S): DiStefano House
2. COUNTY: Monroe TOWN/CITY: Greece VILLAGE: ---
3. STREET LOCATION: 2069 Ridgeway Avenue (S.W. corner of I-390 Expressway ramp)
4. OWNERSHIP: a. public ☐ b. private ☒
5. PRESENT OWNER: Francis W. DiStefano ADDRESS: (same) Rochester, NY 14626
6. USE: Original: residence Present: residence
7. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: Yes ☒ No ☐
Interior accessible: Explain private residence

DESCRIPTION

8. BUILDING MATERIAL: a. clapboard ☐ b. stone ☐ c. brick ☐ d. board and batten ☐
e. cobblestone ☐ f. shingles ☐ g. stucco ☒ other: _____
Roof - membrane (not visible). Foundation - concrete block.
9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM: a. wood frame with interlocking joints ☐
(if known) b. wood frame with light members ☐
c. masonry load bearing walls ☒
d. metal (explain) _____
e. other _____
10. CONDITION: a. excellent ☐ b. good ☒ c. fair ☐ d. deteriorated ☐
11. INTEGRITY: a. original site ☒ b. moved ☐ if so, when? _____
c. list major alterations and dates (if known): _____

(see continuation sheet)

12. PHOTO:

13. MAP:

"Here we have another one of those 'wonders!' It's quite charming. You could assemble a book of these 'fun' houses in Monroe County. I think this is in the 'green plus' category. We gave 151 Dorsey Rd. a 'red minus,' and that's the best of these distinctive houses." P.Malo.



14. THREATS TO BUILDING: a. none known ☐ b. zoning ☐ c. roads ☒
d. developers ☐ e. deterioration ☐
f. other: _____
15. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS AND PROPERTY:
a. barn ☐ b. carriage house ☐ c. garage ☒ - attached
d. privy ☐ e. shed ☐ f. greenhouse ☐
g. shop ☐ h. gardens ☐
i. landscape features: deciduous trees/shrubs; coniferous shrubs
j. other: Bakewind Boarding Kennels(S.W. of house)
16. SURROUNDINGS OF THE BUILDING (check more than one if necessary):
a. open land ☒ b. woodland ☒ - across the street/north of site.
c. scattered buildings ☒
d. densely built-up ☐ e. commercial ☒
f. industrial ☐ g. residential ☒
h. other: _____

17. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS:
(Indicate if building or structure is in an historic district)

(see continuation sheet)

18. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING AND SITE (including interior features if known):

(see continuation sheet)

SIGNIFICANCE

19. DATE OF INITIAL CONSTRUCTION: 1952 (per owner)

ARCHITECT: Frank DiStefano

BUILDER: Emilio Bachetta, mason (per owner)

20. HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE:

(see continuation sheet)

21. SOURCES: (see continuation sheet)

22. THEME: residential

11c.

The original steel casement windows and aluminum frame doors have been replaced (for energy efficiency) by the current owner, c. 1970s-80s.

The one-story porch on the rear elevation has been enclosed, c. 1960s-80s; it may have been originally an open porch.

Contemporary, 1-story, flat-roofed, concrete block garage has been added onto the east elevation (below grade level), c. 1960s.

The roof surface has been replaced only once since the building's 1952 construction. The original membrane roof was replaced with a new roof, c. 1992.

17. The DiStefano House is located on a 1.1-acre lot on the south side of Ridgeway Avenue in the southeast quadrant of the town. A driveway is located to the east of the house and leads to the attached, contemporary garage, which is below road grade level. A second driveway is located to the west of the house which leads to the adjacent Lakewind Kennels, to the immediate southwest of the house. To the west and across the street to the north is undeveloped woodland. To the east is the south-bound ramp leading to the I-390 Expressway. To the south are the kennels and large U-Haul Company storage lockers commercial site. The neighborhood to the west has mostly post-World War II houses (ranch and split levels).

18. This Art Moderne style house features a 1-story, rectangular plan with stucco veneer (over concrete block) and a flat roof with ledge coping. The present owner states that the roof actually has a slight pitch of approximately one-inch, slanting from front to back. Fenestration is asymmetrical with 1/1, double-hung, metal sash and glass block windows - all with brick sills. A large, stucco-veneered chimney with ledge coping is located on the west elevation of the house.

The cornice features a wide, projecting concrete band with curved corners that extends along the east, north, and west elevations. The facade features curved corners and a recessed, off-center main entrance.

18. continued

A one-story, shed-roofed porch extends across the rear (south) elevation. It appears that this porch may have been originally open. It is now enclosed with a band of metal casement windows on the east, south, and west elevations.

The original garage is located below grade at the northeast corner of the house, in the basement. The overhead garage door survives intact, but a contemporary, concrete block, 2-car garage appears to have been constructed slightly later (it is shown on the 1959 map) as an addition to the east elevation. It is adjacent to the original, below-ground garage.

The interior floors of the house are constructed of marble salvaged from a bank that was located on Main Street in downtown Rochester and demolished in the early 1950s. The house is heated by a radiant heating system (there are no radiators or registers).

20. Built in 1952, the DiStefano House is architecturally significant as a representative example of the Modernistic/Art Moderne style of domestic architecture in the town of Greece. The house retains much of its original form, craftsmanship, and materials. The house is also historically significant as an example of the post-World War II suburbanization in the town, and, particularly, along Ridgeway Avenue, which was previously a rural road with scattered farmsteads and residential buildings.

The Modernistic styles were built from about 1920 to 1940. The earlier form was the Art Deco, which was common in public and commercial buildings in the 1920s and early 1930s. It was, however, extremely rare in domestic architecture; there are only a few known surviving houses in this style, although it was frequently used for apartment buildings. After about 1930, Art Moderne became the prevalent Modernistic form. Although never common, many houses were built in the style; scattered examples can be found throughout the country, such as here at 2069 Ridgeway Avenue.

The Modernistic styles received their first major impetus in 1922 when the Chicago Tribune held a world-wide competition for a headquarters building in Chicago. The second-place design in this competition was an Art Deco building designed by Finnish architect, Eliel Saarinen. Much admired by the

20. continued

architectural profession, the design was widely publicized, and the style quickly became the latest architectural fashion. Shortly after 1930 another, more diffuse influence affected the Modernistic style - the beginning of streamlined industrial design for ships, airplanes, and automobiles. The smooth surfaces, curved corners, and horizontal emphasis of the Art Moderne style all give the feeling that airstreams could move smoothly over them; thus they were streamlined. In most buildings, both the horizontal, streamlined Art Moderne and the vertical, zigzagged Art Deco influences occur in combination. In houses, however, the streamline influences predominate. Many examples resemble the contemporaneous International style, in which decorative detailing was reduced to the barest minimum.

Modernistic/Art Modern style houses were never built on a wide basis. The style was considered avant garde and had only limited popularity. On a national level, the construction of new homes (particularly of innovative design) during this era was greatly reduced, with the advent of the Depression in the 1930s and World War II in the 1940s. The rarity of this style, therefore, adds significance to this example on Ridgeway Avenue.

The house at 2069 Ridgeway Avenue embodies these ideas of functionalism and modern technology. It has the basic "block" shape, flat roof and smooth stucco wall surfaces of the Modernistic style. Modern building materials - concrete block, steel, glass block - were used in its construction. The facade is asymmetrical, as is the fenestration. Originally, the windows were steel casement (now replaced) and glass block (still extant). It has the Art Moderne details of one or more curved corners and the use of glass block. Decorative detailing is minimal; the brick window sills are the most notable "decoration." The curved corners on the facade and the wide, horizontal, projecting, curved, cornice band gives a horizontal emphasis to the house.

Although this house was constructed in 1952, slightly late for the Modernistic style, it is of the Art Moderne phase of this important, early-20th-century architectural style. The present owner stated that his father was the designer of this house. His father liked this particular style of architecture and had a machine shop at 1130 Emerson Street that was also designed in the Modernistic style (the shop is

Town of Greece Historic Sites Survey
Monroe County, New York
2069 Ridgeway Avenue
page 6

20. continued

no longer extant; it burned down and was replaced by a brick building).

The 1924 county map shows this property as open, undeveloped land. Ridgeway Avenue is named "Big Ridge Road." Only three houses are on the south side of the road, between Lee Road to the east and Long Pond Road to the west. Most of the north side of the road was open land, with only the two Wehner family farmsteads and the old canal bed shown there.

The present owner, Francis W. DiStefano, states that the house was built by his father in 1952. His father designed the house and builder/mason, Emilio Bachetta constructed the building. They bought the land from the Gell family. The 1955 suburban directory shows Frank and Angelina DiStefano at this address; he is listed as a factory worker. The 1959 county map shows this property with the main "concrete" house and the attached east garage addition. The property is a lot that is 678.2-feet deep by 332-feet wide. The path of the proposed "Rochester Outer Loop" expressway is shown to the east of the house.

Today, this house continues in the ownership of the DiStefano family. It remains one of the few surviving examples of Modernistic/Art Moderne style domestic architecture, not only in the town of Greece, but in Monroe County.

21. See final report for bibliography; phone interview with Francis W. DiStefano, 1/1995.



